

25 August 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: A Concept for an Independent Review of
Intelligence Community Performance

1. This memorandum responds to your recent request for our thoughts on an Intelligence Community review process.

Need

2. We believe that there is a clear and present need for the systematic review and evaluation of how well the Intelligence Community is carrying out its major projects and that the purposes of such a review can best be achieved by a senior, disinterested, and impartial entity, operating full-time on an "off-line" basis. We think the case rests on persuasive requirements, some internal and some external to the Community itself. Central among the aims of a Community review process are:

a. To provide an essential complement to the long-range planning effort now under way in the Community. Planning for the future--whether its aim is to remedy weaknesses or reinforce strengths, or both--depends upon implicit or explicit assumptions about past and present performance. The more explicit the assumptions, the more precise the planning is likely to be.

b. To supply an indispensable adjunct to programs for the improvement of quality and product in Community output. Line managers may not always be the best judges and should not be the sole evaluators of their own projects. Were there no weaknesses whatever, the validity and credibility of their efforts might still be much enhanced by an independent and off-line audit.

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c. To assist in the allocation of resources to new and emerging Community problems; test the validity of recent or prospective shifts, or additive requests, in resource availabilities; provide a potentially useful counterweight in the budget examination process.

d. To help satisfy what we believe will be an increasing Congressional emphasis on Community performance. We think the focus of Congressional attention is visibly shifting from alleged Community abuses to specific Community results in the provision of quality intelligence to policymakers. We estimate that such pressures will grow; that they are the obverse of greater funding, new flexibilities, and restriction relaxations; and that intensified assurances of Community self-examination and improvement will be sought. If the latter are not forthcoming, we think Congressional remedies, external to the Community, likely.

Organization

3. The design of a Community review process should reflect the needs and purposes indicated above. In particular, a Community review group should have as its essential attributes:

a. Community identity and status. It should not be perceived to be a creature of the Agency or any one of its members.

b. Impartial, disinterested, and off-line status, with sufficient stature to enforce a claim to intellectual independence and bureaucratic noninvolvement.

c. Means to ensure access to Community members and full cooperation from all Community elements.

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d. Visibility inside and outside the Community as an indispensable element to the creditability of the group, the bona fides of its processes, and the influence of its operations.

4. Accordingly, we believe the review group should report directly to the DCI/DDCI and be attached to their offices in their capacities as the senior managers of the Community as a whole. The Intelligence Community Staff should be tasked to provide needed staff support, e.g., collection and processing of data, preliminary drafting, etc.

5. We would anticipate that the work of such a group would be of interest to the PFIAB. We think that any formal relationship between them should wait upon discussions with the PFIAB after its reestablishment. We believe that any eventual arrangements or relationships should be defined in ways that would not diminish the primacy of DCI/DDCI authority over the process.

Operating Concept

6. We suggest that the group be authorized considerable flexibility in its selection of subject matter and in the form of its reports to the DCI/DDCI. It should be empowered to conduct inquiries into broad or narrow topics, including those primarily of interest to the professional community and those primarily of concern to policymakers. It should be able to carry out post mortems, examine current capabilities in selected fields, and survey anticipated future needs. Depending on subject matter and special requirements, its work could range from objective studies in-depth to more rapid and necessarily more subjective analyses. It should encompass both examinations of Community failure, and studies of Community success. Its aim should be not on the quantity of its own production but on carefully targeted studies selected for potential payoff in Community performance improvement.

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Composition

7. We think a membership of four or five, full-time, about right. Professional stature and some policymaking experience at senior levels would be obvious attributes. Recently retired officers of high rank--or active officers with sufficient grade to be presumed largely impervious to bureaucratic considerations--present important advantages.

8. Ad hoc members for specific tasks, and the use of consultants as needed, should be authorized to the group. Consideration should also be given, both as resource elements and as a means of increasing Community participation, to identify CIA, DIA, NSA, and State/INR representatives available for consultation by the group on a periodic or as needed basis. In any event, each of the intelligence agencies should designate senior points of contact for necessary liaison.

Timing

9. We believe that we may be in a unique period and that there would be clear gains in establishing such a group this September. There is a new Administration and a new leadership in the Community. Additionally, each of the agencies concerned has, or is about to have, new management. The PFIAB is about to be reconstituted. New oversight arrangements are in effect in the Congress. The Community is in one of its formative stages and a review process might very usefully be fitted into this period of growth. It may well be some time before a similar conjunction of events reoccurs.

10. We would be glad to discuss these views with you further at your convenience.


William Leonhart

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